GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:686
ANSWERED ON:20.07.2016
Passport Seva Project
Nishad Shri Ajay

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has assessed the functioning of the pilot stage of Passport Seva Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds allocated for the project during the current year;

(d) whether the Government is aware of the deplorable condition of the existing regional passport offices in the country and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the various steps taken/being taken by the Government to ensure satisfactory service by the Passport Seva Kendras to customers?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) Yes. The Pilot for the Passport Seva Project (PSP) was launched in May, 2010 and the Government had assessed the functioning of the Project. The Third Party Audit Agency (3PAA) − Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification (STQC), an attached office of the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), Government of India had carried out a detailed technical appraisal of the Project and given a go-ahead before the Project was fully rolled out on 12th June, 2012. The PSP is being successfully run in Public-Private-Partnership mode with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) as the Service Provider. After the nation-wide rollout, the Project is currently in the Operations and Maintenance Phase. Since the launch of the Pilot in May 2010, 3.69 Crore passport services have been rendered till 30th June, 2016,

(c) There is no separate budget allocation for Passport Seva Project. However, Rs. 730.04 Crore has been allocated for the Central Passport Organisation for FY 2016-17 which includes expenditure to be incurred for the operation and maintenance of the PSP.

(d) With the implementation of Passport Seva Project, Seventy Seven Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) with best-in-class amenities were set up across the country as extended arms of the 37 Passport Offices (PO), thus providing extended reach to passport applicants in various States/Union Territories initially. Subsequently, to provide more access points for passport services, the Ministry had decided to set up 19 additional Passport Seva Laghu Kendras (PSLK). Out of these 19 PSLKs, 12 have already started functioning in various States and Union Territories till June 2016. The Regional Passport Offices are now rendering passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible manner and in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes.

(e) The Government has taken various steps to ensure satisfactory service to the citizens by PSKs. The entire passport issuance process is online. The Passport Portal (www.passportindia.gov.in) is accessible to anyone, anywhere and anytime. The applicants apply for passport service online, pay Passport Fee also through the Portal and visit the PSK at the appointed date and time. Applicants' presence in person at the PSK enables the Passport Issuing Authority to capture their photographs and biometrics to avoid the chances of impersonation. The applicants also get full opportunity to see and affirm their personal particulars to be entered in the passport to avoid unnecessary hassels. The objective behind receiving applicants with prior appointment is to reduce waiting time to the minimum. Status of applications can be tracked by the applicants through the passport website or through mPassport Seva mobile application. An e-mail based helpdesk facility and a 24x7 National Call Centre have been set up to provide requisite information to citizens in 17 languages. Periodic SMS messages are sent to the citizen intimating the various stages of process of passport application including date of police verification and dispatch of passport. The number of public dealing counters has been increased from the erstwhile 350 to 1610 in the new system and public dealing hours have gone up from 4 hours to 7 hours a day. In order to bridge the digital divide, more than one lakh internet enabled Common Services Centres (CSCs) in rural areas have been authorized to facilitate online passport application service to citizens at a nominal charge not exceeding Rs. 100/-.

The Government has recently simplified the process of issuance of passport in order to provide satisfactory services from PSKs and make it more expedient and convenient. The Ministry of External Affairs has made two major changes recently that have expedited the process for first time passport applicants as well as made it more convenient to secure an online appointment at the local Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs). As per these changes, the first time passport applicants who furnish Aadhaar Card, Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), PAN Card and an affidavit of non-criminality in the prescribed format, will get faster service, without payment of

additional fees, subject to successful online validation of Aadhaar and other databases, if required. The passports under this liberal dispensation are issued on Post-Police Verification basis.

The second measure pertains to securing online Appointments for submission of passport applications at PSKs. The new provision is allowing applicants to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/rescheduling an appointment for passport related services. Earlier, the System used to offer only one available date to the applicant for seeking appointment for passport related services. These measures have simplified the process of passport issuance and reduced the difficulties faced by the citizens.

In order to meet the growing demands and provide the Appointments smoothly, Passport Melas are being organised at the PSKs and to secure greater reach in order to provide service at the door, Passport Seva Camps are also being held in the remote and distant areas by PSKs under the supervision of respective POs.